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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 August 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Violence in the Middle East

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) would like to draw the attention of 30th Session of the Human Rights Council to the human rights situation in a number of Middle Eastern countries. This NGO believes that violence and extremism is growing in the region because of the lack of attention or support of western powers, and civilians are always the first and most suffering victims.

In Yemen, following the intervention of alliance forces led by Saudi, the humanitarian crisis increased and thousands of civilians are killed. In the latest attacks against Ta-az province alone, many homes and villages have been bombed, 60 people are left dead and another 80 injured.

According to latest figures, following the attacks of the alliance to-date 23,000 are left dead and injured. UNICEF announced that the average number of Yemeni children that have been killed or injured has reached to 8 per day. From March 26th 2015 and the start of the war in Yemen till now, 400 children have been killed and another 600 injured.

13 million Yemenis are suffering from food shortages and 6 million are suffering from extreme food shortages, and badly need international aid. And this means that 2 out of every five Yemenis are in need of emergency aid, and this average is on the increase.

Reminding the need to respect the sovereignty of nations, the right to self-determination of nations and prohibition of military intervention principles, ODVV states that the military attack against Yemen is unlawful according to the Geneva Conventions, and while condemning this, the UN must provide the basis for the observation and proper implementation principles, and facilitate the judicial and executive measures for the victims. Furthermore air attacks against residential and civilian areas in Yemen and the killing of civilians, are all violations of fundamental and humanitarian law. Therefore while supporting the right to legitimate defence of the people of Yemen, ODVV calls for a UN special investigation, particularly the Human Rights Council, on the violation of humanitarian law in the country.

The human rights situation in Bahrain continues to deteriorate. ODVV is concerned about the legislation and application of unjust laws in the country. These include the Press law of 2002 which allows for journalists that criticize the government get arrested, the defamation and insult law of 2014, which criminalizes any insult against the king, the anti-terror law which allows the security forces to persecute political opponents of the government, the 2013 law on the prohibition of all demonstrations and congregations all over the country, which has resulted in the detention of many citizens, civil activists and journalists (since 2011, more than 300 women have been detained in Bahrain and been subjected to torture), and many other laws.

Unfortunately there are numerous reports that indicate the freedom expression and belief is severely violated by the government, to such an extent that in recent unrests a large number of journalists, reporters, civilians, and human rights defenders have been subjected to pressure and or arrested for their beliefs or news coverage of incidents and or human rights advocacy. ODVV calls upon the Human Rights Council to make the Bahrain government accountable for violation of freedom of expression and belief, and while condemning the ratification and implementation of unjust laws, calls on the Yemeni government to remove such laws.

In Iraq, following the increasing crimes of the ISIS terror group, which has occupied approximately half of the country, and has turned into a serious threat to the people of Iraq. Displacement of over 3 million people, destruction of a substantial part of the economic infrastructures of the country, kidnappings, rape, and use of children in armed conflicts and killing and injuring of over 4000 civilians are all causes for concern of ODVV. While expressing concern of the increasing dire human rights situation in Iraq, ODVV stresses on the support and cooperation of the international community with the government, leadership and people of Iraq and asks the international community to make a more effective intervention to free Iraq of the inhuman acts of ISIS, and encourage the Human Rights Council to support the economic and judicial reform programs of Iraq, and calls upon states to assist reconstruction of the country.

In Syria, the terrorist and inhuman acts continue to take place against civilians. While reminding the articles of Human Rights Council 29th Session A/HRC/29/L.4 resolution, on the basis of the condemnation of the killing of civilians with heavy weapons, torture in prisons and detention centres, ODVV sees cause for concern of the inhuman acts of terror

groups in the region. Organized violence committed against civilians. Terror attacks of the numerous terrorist groups in the country, who are supported by a number of countries, is strongly condemned by the ODVV Extremist ideology and the brutality of a number of groups in the conflict theatre in Syria, does not conform to any religion, culture or civilization, and all Monotheist religions and cultures deem these types of inhuman and brutal acts only as the systematic and extensive violation of human rights and international humanitarian law principles.

ODVV deems the existing political and religious tensions in the country as having roots in the failure to have an apt dialogue among Syrians and supports the new people plan for Syria which is also approved by the UN Security Council and calls upon states to assist Syria within the framework of their duties in this path.